

Action Item

Governmental Relations Committee

Approval of the Minutes of the July 31, 2001, Meeting

MINUTES

Governmental Relations Committee

Meeting of July 31, 2001

Committee members present Howard Welinsky, *Chair*
Phillip J. Forhan
Robert A. Hanff
Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr.
Olivia K. Singh
Alan S. Arkatov, *ex officio*
Carol Chandler, *ex officio*

Other Commissioners present
William D. Campbell
Susan Hammer
Kyo "Paul" Jhin
Odessa P. Johnson
Melinda G. Wilson

Committee member absent Evonne Seron Schulze, *Vice Chair*
Lance Izumi

Call to order Committee Chair Welinsky convened the Governmental Relations Committee at 11:41 a.m.

Legislative and budget update, July 2001

Commission staff member Kevin Woolfork stated that the Governor had just signed the budget into law recently in the amount of \$103 billion in general funds and selected special and bond funds. He said the State general fund portion of the budget actually represents a decrease from the prior year, but that higher education, in general, fared relatively well. However, he said there were some significant budget cuts in public higher education budgets.

Mr. Woolfork said documents handed out at the meeting contained a brief summary of the highlights of the Governor's budget. He cautioned that this information is preliminary and further reconciliation will be forthcoming in a later report.

Commissioner Forhan expressed his frustration with the deletion of the money for scheduled maintenance and repairs of the community colleges. He said many structures on community college campuses are in dire need of repair. Withdrawing the funds would be devastating.

Staff member Marge Chisholm passed out an updated bill matrix and outlined the latest changes that have occurred during the legislative process. She recommended that the committee adopt the revised matrix reflecting the following changes:

- ♦ AB 16 - change from a "support, if amended" to a "support position" on the Hertzberg bond proposal.

- ♦ AB 540 (Firebaugh) - a new bill the committee may want to discuss at this meeting.
- ♦ AB 1299 (Leonard) – changed from a bond proposal (Leonard is now a co-author with the Speaker Hertzberg on AB 16) to a spot bill and staff suggests a “watch” position.
- ♦ SB 379 (Alarcon) – change to a “formal support” position (there is money in the bill for staff to assess the available data on student resources pertinent to application to college and financial aid information).
- ♦ Items 40 and 42 - remove these from the matrix as the bills have been significantly amended and do no longer affect higher education issues.

A motion was made to adopt the entire matrix, including the proposed changes. The motion was seconded and carried with Commissioner Chandler opposing the “support” position on AB 540.

Ms. Chisholm provided a brief explanation of AB 540 (Firebaugh). She said the bill would qualify high school students in the State of California for resident rather than nonresident fees if they have attended and graduated from high school in California for three years. This would enable them to apply for financial aid, if eligible. The requirement for students moving in from out of state is one year and one day with the exception of UC where a residence of three years is required. An extensive discussion followed on this bill.

Commissioner Wilson asked for a clarification on the committee’s position on AB 622 and SB 611. Ms. Chisholm explained the bills will not go forward in their present form. She also explained the differences between positions of “support, if amended” and “oppose, unless amended.”

Commissioner Rodriguez suggested that in the Legislative bill summaries, staff indicate the committee’s concerns on certain positions so that the Commissioners who have not discussed the bills in detail will be more aware of the rationale behind the position.

**Federal update,
July 2001**

Staff member Karl Engelbach advised that this item is presented for the committee’s information and requires no action. He updated the committee on four emerging issues:

- ♦ Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act;
- ♦ Appropriation bill for education programs;
- ♦ Introduction of House Resolution 2482 which proposes to eliminate the “tuition sensitivity” formula in current Federal law (it also would expand the Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits and the Commission executive director will send a letter of support for this bill).
- ♦ Introduction of House Resolution 1992 that would amend current federal law to make it easier for students who enroll in distance education programs to receive federal student financial aid.

Responding to a request by Commissioner Arkatov, Mr. Beyer explained the HR 1991 timetable in Congress and said that a signal of support would be helpful in order to make a strong case to the Senate. Mr. Engelbach cautioned against rushing into support without further discussion and debate about several issues.

Commissioner Arkatov requested that the committee recommend that the Executive Director take all appropriate measures with Congressman's Isaacson's office to relate the Commission's support of the bill. An official vote is to be taken at the October meeting. Chair Welinsky agreed to do so by unanimous consent of the committee.

With respect to HR 2482, Chair Welinsky also directed staff to send a letter expressing the Commission's support of this measure.

Status Report
Update: AB 1123
Task Force

Staff member Kathleen Chavira highlighted activities in response to AB 1123 which requires the commission to convene an intersegmental working group to facilitate the development of statewide funding priorities for technology in higher education. Her report included the following:

- ◆ A review of the materials provided in the agenda item;
- ◆ An update on the last meetings of the intersegmental working group;
- ◆ Information and preliminary findings about a distance-learning survey undertaken by the Commission staff; and
- ◆ Proposed actions and meeting schedule

Commissioner Campbell expressed concern that the work of the Commission should not undermine ongoing activities in which the public higher education segments may have already invested significant time and resources. He suggested that the work of the Commission should recognize and support existing activities within the segments.

Ms. Chavira stated that the committee was comprised of representatives from each of the segments and that these representatives have articulated these same concerns.

Other business

Commissioner Arkatov referred to the earlier discussion concerning the bond measure and directed the Governmental Relations Committee to work with the Legislature, specifically the leaderships offices of the Assembly and Senate, on the actual drafting of language for that ballot initiative. He said there will not be another Commission meeting until October and that language will have been completed by then. He said the Governmental Relations Committee has the support of the full Commission to come back to the Commission and, should this become necessary, conduct a Commission conference call regarding recommendations on the actual bond bill language. Chair Arkatov would like for the Governmental Relations Committee to take the lead in terms of understanding the measure passed earlier today in terms of responsibilities, the dollar amount and accountability.

Adjournment Hearing no public comment and having no further business, Chair Welinsky adjourned the Governmental Relations Committee at 12:45 p.m.
